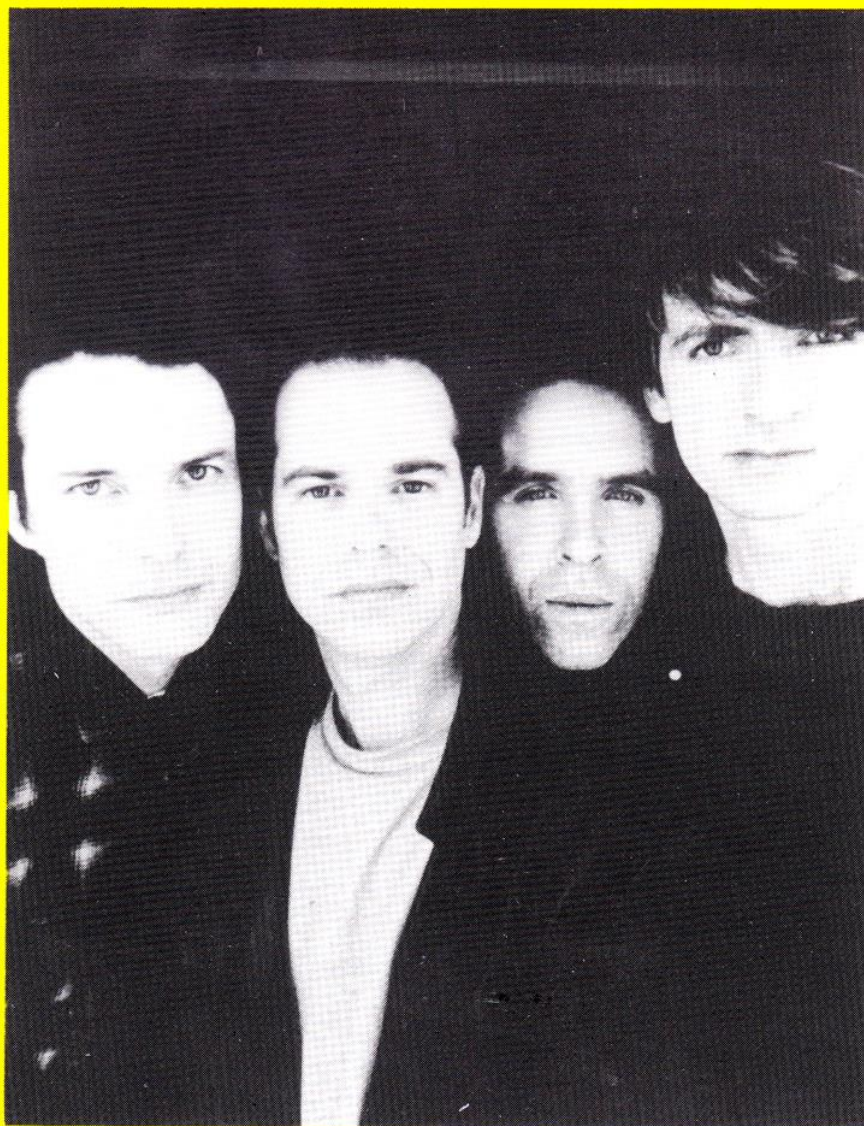




# HOUSE ON FIRE



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**NUMBER 155**  
**NOVEMBER '93**

**CROWDED HOUSE AND  
YOUTH CULTURE**

**plus**  
**RONNIE JAMES DIO**  
**The Rock'n'Roll Pharmacist**





MEGASTORE

# RECORDEDdelivery

9-8 CORPORATION STREET, BIRMINGHAM

## AON

Aon (Big Life)

Annie Burton uses her beautiful, clear voice in such a way that it's easy to imagine her filling the female guest spot at Cropredy in a year or two. Sadly, on a few of these tracks she is backed by puerile dance rhythms which serve her badly and which even Sandy Denny couldn't save. Mostly, though, especially on Through Time and Lost And Found (the latter reminiscent of This Mortal Coil's finer moments) she and band shine together.

Andy Mabbett

## TEENAGE FANCLUB

Thirteen (Creation)

Is that the riff from T. Rex's 20th Century Boy I hear open Hang On?

Alright! Let's go! Err, hold on - where did it disappear to? It's been replaced by that familiar TFC Beatley whine! So I'll take my leave - bye! On second thoughts, I'm a professional - I ought to be able to grit my teeth and SUFFER! So, let's see,

what else is there? The criminally short, instrumental, Get Funky is pretty meaty and the instrumental first half of final track, Gene Clarke I can get to. But that's about it, really. The rest seemed to be a clutch of wet, wimpy, ineffectual meanderings. For a superior example of this kind of stuff, turn your ears to the BMX Bandits.

Max

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

Big Times In A Small Town - The Vineyard Tapes (Philo / Topic)

The Mother Theresa of Folk Musicians, Christine Lavin, strikes again; by [her] invitation, around sixty American folk artists performed at the Wintertide Coffeehouse in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, during September 1992. Big Times ... is a seventeen track soupçon of the month long event.

A handful of the Vineyard protagonists - David Willcox, Cliff Eberhardt, Patty Larkin, Cheryl Wheeler, David Roth and David Buskin have

appeared on previous Lavinganzas. While acknowledging their undoubted talents, the real delight of these compilations, lies in the discovery of previously unknown artists.

Which brings me to a handful of commendations. First, there's James Mee's amusing tale of America the Minor in the album title track. John Forster also deals in humorous turns of phrase; coming across as a mixture of Victor Borge and Tom Lehrer, it's sufficient to relate that his travelogue is titled Entering Marion. Honourable mentions also for Chuck Pyle's A Time To Decide/Endless Sky and Pierce Pettis' Nod Over Coffee.

And then there's the longest cut on the set, Pete Nelson's Summer of Love. Spanning the quarter century which followed 1967 (in seven and a half minutes!), the story/lyric balances the innocence of youth with the reflections of a worldly wise forty something. One of the finest songs I'll ever hear in my lifetime, kind of nails it. Essential [for this track alone], is something of an understatement.

Arthur Wood

## KRISTINA OLSEN

Love, Kristina (Philo / Topic)

This is Olsen's second album in as many years. As with her self titled debut, she retains Nina Gerber in the role of producer. With an eclectic mix of New Age, bluegrass and folk / contemporary players, the musical standards are high but I find the material lacking at times. Lyrical, most of Olsen's songs are concerned with love and relationships. And whilst How Can You Think That I Don't Know? and Keeping This Life Of Mine are damned fine songs, I can't quite reconcile such fillers as Little Brother Sure Can Dance, or for that matter, the point of the eighty second long album title cut and the equally short Five Year Old.

The verdict. Thoroughly pleasing in parts. Patchy in places.

Arthur Wood

## ALISON MOYET

Essex (Columbia)

After redefining herself with Hoodoo, Moyet returns to deliver the sort of album that makes her past 'vintage' recordings seem redundant. This is a cracker of a pop album, that explodes from the speakers with a new found fire and commitment in her voice and songs (like Dorothy and Falling) that stamp themselves into your mind and refuse to budge. Uncluttered, often nakedly acoustic, arrangements hark back to the 60s with their cascading melodies but also sound 90s fresh, be it a superb new version of Yazoo number Ode To Boy, a cover of Whispering Your Name or the haunting Celtic gospel of Take Of Me. Essexceptional.

Mike Davies

## THE POINTER SISTERS

Only Sisters Can Do That (SBK)

Anyone who'd written off the Pointers had better think again this isn't just a remarkable comeback it's one of the year's best. From dance-pop to spine-shivering balladeering and nervy rock'n'roll it's a celebration of sisterhood - both siblings and women in general - that stands proud and assertive as it declares It Ain't A Man's World. Everything here electrifies, but especially notable charges come with the sensational Lose Myself To Find Myself, the physical dance-

rock of Sex, Love Or Money and the gospel-burning I Want Fireworks, as right on a slice of sexual assertiveness as their classic Slow Hand.

Mike Davies

## HEDNINGARA

Kaksi (Silence)

Not here's something to challenge pigeon-holders. A former Finnish punkette, a woman who sang in Finnish musicals (and how many of them can you name), and three Swedish guys obsessed with ancient Scandinavian music, one of whom invents his own instruments. Add to this influences that range from Balkan gypsy dance and African rhythms, European madrigals, Mississippi blues, and Aboriginal and South American instrumental textures, all thrown into a melting pot of traditional Northern Scandinavian folk songs, and you've got yourself a remarkable pot-pourri of world music that ranges from vibrant reels to evocative ballads. And which has already attracted the interest of leading dance mixers and gained champions in the form of The Levellers. Roxette it's not!

Mike Davies

## THE REVENANTS

Horse Of A Different Colour (Hunter S)

Once upon a time there was a band called Stars Of Heaven who sought to bring the country spirit of Gram Parsons to Irish guitar rock. They made Speak Slowly, an album of both strength and fragile beauty, overflowing with songs of classic stature, and promptly vanished under the crushing weight of public apathy. Five years on and as the name suggests, this is a resurrection of sorts and happily the only thing that has changed in the interim is the willingness to listen with open ears to their brand of music. Stephen Ryan's vocals are still as resplendently aching as his plaintive melodies and the reflective, well observed lyrics of songs like The Drinking Side Of Me, Forbidden Mourning and Your For Whom Silence. As a bonus, guest vocalist Eileen Gogan brings a touch of 10,000 Maniacs folksiness to Capercailie (dedicated to Paul Westerberg) and Speak Slowly (which never actually appeared on the album named after it) to make this one of the year's quiet masterpieces.

Mike Davies



TEENAGE FANCLUB



## THE PLANETS / SPACE SPECTACULAR NIA, Birmingham

What we had here was another chapter in the mass marketing of the classics. Take The CBSO and have them staged in an arena by the team of lighting and staging designers normally on call for Pink Floyd. To add to the possibility of selling 12,000 tickets for a classical gig, add some space film themes as foreplay.

Well sell out it did and even more surprising was the fact that the sound of the orchestra was fine and in the same building that had acoustically all but demolished Prince.

Now I'm not about to comment upon the CBSO's handling of the Holst - I'm sure it was sublime; it certainly sounded it ... but it was an anti-climax. Aside from the fact that The Planets does draw to a mellow close, the much heralded visuals - a series of technically adept moving slides - did look, as colleague Andy Mabbett pointed out, rather like Terry Gilliam's celebrated Monty Python graphics.

The problem was that it followed the set of John Williams stirring themes from ET, Star Wars, Close Encounters and selections from 2001; all of which were accompanied by state of the art rock standard lighting. There were vari-lites, dry ice and pneumatically controlled rigs that swooped over the audience like the craft in Close Encounters.

The Planets and back projected Tarot symbols really had little chance. That first half really was something.

Steve Morris

## BON JOVI / BILLY IDOL / LITTLE ANGELS / MANIC STREET PREACHERS

Milton Keynes Bowl

Having listened to Manic Street Preachers from the car in the one and a half hour queue to pay four quid to park in a field, I wandered into the bowl just in time to catch Britain's greatest rock hope, Little Angels. No strangers to the venue, the Angels, though technically and musically competent, simply didn't cut it performance wise. Still, everyone is entitled to an off day. They went down a

# LIVE

storm, incidentally!

In contrast Billy Idol's set was exceptional. Great stage presence and showmanship. Superb renditions of some real classics. The common belief seems to be that Billy's had his day. No way.

Likewise Bon Jovi were awesome. Supported by incredible lighting and pyrotechnics, the guy just reeled 'em off, one after another with style and conviction. Generally gigs on this scale suck, yet the band created an atmosphere few other bands could muster. 120,000 satisfied punters over two nights can't be wrong.

Mark Hadley

## ROGER CHAPMAN & THE SHORTLIST

The Robin Hood, Merry Hill

With all due respect to the Robin (a fine venue, if somewhat warm and sweaty), a man of Chapman's impressive pedigree and immense talent should be playing the Euro-Stadium circuit, not a Black Country club. Not for Chapman the safe option of an hour long pedestrian meander through greatest hits; he and his stage-crowding five piece band played for over the promised two hours, then returned to encore for another 30 minutes. From the first moment Chapman's energy rose to a peak which he maintained throughout, not even breaking his stride as he indulged in his habit of throwing any available object (usually his cowbell or a towel) at the ceiling, around the stage or to a member of the audience. Fortunately, nothing heavier was to hand.

Alongside many Family favourites - Anyway was a standout crowd pleaser - were cover versions ranging from Tennessee Ernie Ford's 1956 chart topper Sixteen Tons to the more recent Shadow On The Wall, which Chapman sang for Mike Oldfield's Crises in 1983. Despite being stretched to more than double it's orig-

inal length, this still ended all too soon.

The distinctive and unique warble in Chapman's voice will ensure that there will never be a Björn Again style Family tribute band, but none is needed while the man himself can inspire such ardour in an audience. Aside from the inevitable talkative drunks (why do they always stand next to me?) the partisan crowd accepted every invitation to audience participation, loving every minute. Roger Chapman may no longer be a member of Family, but he was certainly among friends tonight.

Andy Mabbett

## KATY MOFFATT

Breedon Bar, Birmingham

Undertaking her third UK tour, the second this year, Katy was magnificently supported throughout her two sets by Canadian born David Wilkie's mandolin and vocals. In fact, the duo meshed so tightly, you couldn't even discern the join.

During a 1986 interview with Katy, she commented to me that "no matter whether I'm cutting Drifters songs, you can't take the country out of my voice." The [heart]ache in her vocal delivery of Half Moon Boulevard being enough to bring a tear to the eyes of grown men.

I've never seen Katy Moffatt give less than 200% effort onstage. Her career has been peppered with misadventure and misfortune, yet the lady retains a ready smile and a positive outlook, which makes her in my opinion, considerably more than just your average songbird/writer. Hell, the lady is a true (honky tonk) angel, right here on planet Earth.

Arthur Wood.

## SPIN DOCTORS / GIN BLOSSOMS

Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

Would you believe it! No sooner had I told anyone who would listen how much I thought their piss-weak album stank, than the Gin Blossoms poked a stick in my eye by pulling it off live! Simple, good time poppy rock'n'roll with a hint of Lemonheads and Manics about them. Now what the hell did I do with that album...? (Probably traded it! Gin Blossoms loving Ed.)

... Flash bastards. But then wouldn't you want to show off if you'd graduated from New York's New School of Jazz, you were funky and all of a sudden the whole world loved you? It's weird to think that it was only March when I caught the Spin Doctors last, at Edwards No8 in front of about 50 people and now here they were selling out the Civic! Don't worry, I'm not going to get into one of those, 'Aah, they're not half as good when I saw 'em at ...' trips, but it did occur to me whilst watching and grooving to their superbly laid back, funky show that the Spin Doctors are very much a club band. They don't need a huge, monstrous PA solidifying their rubbery

rhythms into cold concrete. But they do need time. Time to stretch a song out, sending it slo-mo boomerang-like around the room, catching it and taking it back home. Sure, they spun out Shinbone Alley so that yer 'average' large venue goers started to look from side to side, wondering what the hell was going on, bless 'em, but the Dox shouldn't have to bow down to municipal building restrictions - they should be allowed to slip and slide, rock'n'roll, funk'n'fool around into the small hours.

But that's the big time for you. So we took what we could. And the Dox will always give as much as they can. Of course, everyone marvelled at the sheer bliss and naughtiness of Jimmy Olsen's Blues, cheered the success of Two Princes and wiggled out to Little Miss Can't Be Wrong. But I would have gladly missed my last bus home for just one more song. Ah well, I s'pose the Dox are gonna need their sleep if we want any freshly recorded material out of them.

Max

## DRIFT

Jug Of Ale, Moseley

Fancy banging your head against a brick shit-house wall topped with cat-paw cutting glass?

Read on.

Drift, four snappers from Stratford, simmer and fester inside a two guitar concrete-sandwich of distortion, fuzz, feedback and reckless amplified toxic mayhem.

The pace they runaway train at, should have the whole set imploding with gruesome black hole proportions. It almost does sometimes which lends an air of genuine unpredictability.

Young enough to crayon the set-list on the inside cover of Coles Notes they're still able to demonstrate influences of mongrel grunge, new wave and atonal thrash; together with dollops of harmonic bunker-crushing chord sequences they got from God knows where.

Drift have a disintegrating dynamic. Rough, raw and edgy - they kick out one hell of a stink. Well worth a sniff.

John Kennedy

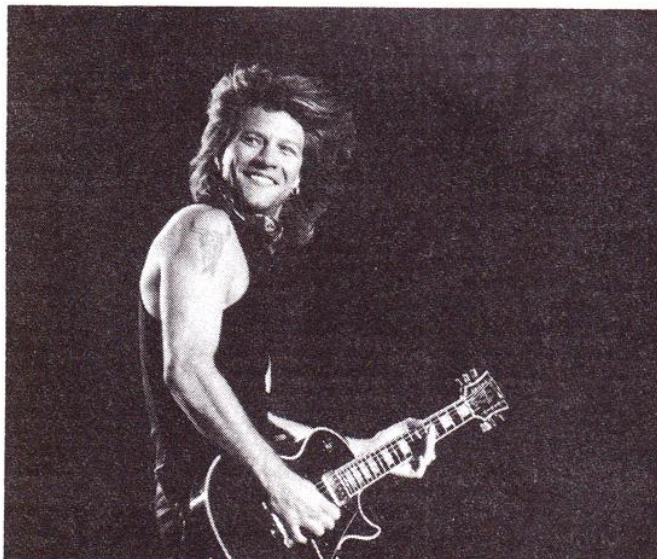
## TANGLEFOOT

Pen & Wig, Birmingham

Recent Chapter 22 signings and soon-to-be the next 'sensation' to come out of Brum (once the single's released), Tanglefoot are a frenetic, punk-pop outfit that know the worth of showmanship. Vocalist and Saul Wisplant lookalike, John, dreadlocks flailing in fine Marley tradition, continues to bob and weave even if it means he hasn't enough breath left to sing. But then speed-of-light bassman Paul is more than able to take over if necessary. In fact, one of Tanglefoot's strengths lies in the neat vocal interplay between these two, whilst still thrashing around like mad things.

And they have another head start to stardom: 3 couldn't-give-a-shit fans (combined age 30, I swear!) in Obituary and Iron Maiden t-shirts (?) who're more than willing to head bang, play air guitar, perform baby stage dives and treat Tanglefoot like gods even at this early stage! Don't disappoint 'em boys - you have responsibilities now!

Max



BON JOVI SNAPPED BY MARK HADLEY AT MILTON KEYNES BOWL